DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 072 717 HE 003 261

AUTHOR Van Dusen, Albert C.; Brictson, Robert C.
TITLE University-Urban Interface: Issues, Methodology, Prospects.
INSTITUTION Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. University Urban Interface Program.
PUB DATE Apr 72
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Boston (43rd, April 27-29, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *City Improvement; *City Problems; Community Change; *Community Service Programs; *Higher Education; *Social Responsibility; Urban Education; *Urban Universities

ABSTRACT

The University-Urban Interface Program (UUIP) of the University of Pittsburgh is an action-research effort designed to study the actual and potential roles of the University in the community in a time of change. Five basic projects are included within the UUIP: (1) Minority and Community Services; (2) Campus Development Impact; (3) Communications; (4) Long-Range Pittsburgh Goals; and (5) University Governance Organization for Community Relations. The interaction between major city-based universities and their urban communities has become a matter of great national significance. On the one hand, the increasing intensity of our urban problems and the growing public awareness of and concern about these problems have given them the highest national domestic priority. Almost simultaneously, the major universities of the country have come to be viewed as powerful resources for solving all sorts of national problems and for achieving national priorities. These two developments converge in what can be called the university-urban interface. (Author/HS)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 072717

EASTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

43rd ANNUAL MEETING - BOSTON
April 27-29, 1972

University-Urban Interface: Issues, Methodology, Prospects

Albert C. Van Dusen and Robert C. Brictson
University of Pittsburgh

ABSTRACT

University-Urban Interface is an action-research program designed to inventory, improve,plan, and concurrently evaluate the interaction of an established urban institution of higher education with its community constituencies. Standard methodologies, heuristics, and innovative techniques are employed to analyze university response to urban problems in a time of change.

HE 003 261

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The University of Pittsburgh involvement in urban and social problems has been a gradual one and extended over a long period of time. As early as 1952 the University reported to its accrediting Association that many of its courses and programs were constructed and designed specifically to meet urban needs.[1] By 1956 the Chancellor was advocating a new direction of a more active role, saying that the University should regard itself as a vehicle for doing things that would not otherwise be done.[2] In his inaugural address in 1967 our current Chancellor said ..... "we are on the verge of a new era of public involvement of the University.....it will require placing the University into active public service .....the University.....will become the creative eye for the new Society--for its communications systems, its social patterns, its political and economic structures ....."

To complement his forceful pronouncement the Chancellor effected a major administrative reorganization of the University. The Office of Vice Chancellor for Program Development and Public Affairs was established and a University Counsel on Urban Programs was named under the Vice Chancellor's chairmanship. This Vice Chancellor was to assist with the development and implementation of a new concern for an improved public service role of the University. To many of the Faculty, the public service role of the University had been interpreted as being limited to the total impact of its teaching and research programs which were assumed to be "in the public good" as well as useful to enrolled students. But in today's role this was not enough.

Every university school and department was encouraged to examine how its public service function should complement the more traditional teaching and research functions. The new office sought to encourage greater emphasis on the public service dimension in general and a particular focus on urgent "urban crises" problems, especially those related to improved social justice.

A complete compendium of all urban programs being undertaken throughout the University was prepared and analyzed. This demonstrated that the University was already engaged in an impressive array of activities related to urban problems. In order to gain insight into how other institutions were going about relating to community and urban problems, visits were made to Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, University of Chicago, Boston University and Tufts.

The Chancellor requested each faculty group examine how the school, the department or individuals could better help meet the critical urban problems and make proposals for any new programs which if implemented could make a significant contribution to improved social justice. In response, over 100 detailed proposals requiring new funding were formulated and sub mitted. The offices of the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Program Development and Public Affairs, and the Director of Planning, evaluated all

the proposals and listed those considered to merit funding. Presentations were made to potential donors and funds, although limited in comparison to the need, were secured thereby enabling some divisions of the University to go beyond their volunteer efforts. Some were able to undertake substantial new programs.

Simultaneously additional University resources were being allocated to enhance black student enrollments and to improve the academic opportunities for these students within the academic programs. A University-Community Educational Programs office to coordinate the various internal efforts initiated to help minority students was created, the University's Olympic-size swimming pool was opened to neighborhood children. A variety of volunteer efforts to serve critical community needs, especially in the black communities, were made by faculty staff and students.

These random efforts to generate a greater commitment to public service and an increased involvement in urban problems led to another important new direction for the University--the development of an institutional focus upon the "urban crises". Understandably, some members of the academic community believed that there was a great urgency to have the University respond to all facets of the "urban crises" such as race relations, transportation, water pollution, social justice, equal opportunity for housing, education and jobs, etc. Amidst all these diverse and decentralized efforts by the faculty, staff, and administrators, the University Counsel on Urban Programs under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor mentioned above sought to provide the principal coordination. The part-time nature of this direction had its limitations and it was recognized that one or more offices with full-time personnel could more effectively implement the University's public service efforts.

The office of Urban and Community Services was the first public

service type office established and it deals primarily with the University's relationships with the minority communities. Established first on the basis of grant funds until it could be absorbed in the operating budget of the University, it now has a staff of some 10 individuals with a black psychologist as its director. Its 6 urban-action coordinators, most of whom are black, work toward better communications and understanding between the University and the several minority communities. These coordinators are assigned to specific areas in the University as well as to the designated poverty areas of the city, the largest one of which is adjacent to the University campus and is largely black in population.

The staff of this office has served as the advocate spokesman for minorities when such is assumed to be needed. Its staff is also available, upon request, to offer counsel to any school or department about any action programs planned for a minority community.

A primary attention and activity of the office of the University and Community Services and that of its urban action coordinators focused upon that part of the "urban crises" related to the concerns of and for the minority community. The institutional and public concerns for many of the other causes of the "urban crises", e.g., transportation pollution, air and water, etc., were responded to systematically by the relevant schools and departments with the encouragement of the Provost's Office.

Another new office is one which deals with local government and local community relationships important to campus expansion. In this instance there is only one professional who is assigned to the office of Governmental Relations. However, he calls upon the part-time support of other professionals in that office as well as officers of the University and staff members in other divisions as needed.

Functions which are related to the two new offices mentioned above are included among the specific objectives in the study being supported over a three-year period by the Office of Education. There are big issues and problems related to these functions and others in the public service sector. Let me pose some of these questions here--how do you achieve a coordinated approach in a University where there is a great diversity among faculty members whose individual preferred interests usually impede or block any common theme or program? How do you allocate funds for the magnitude of the problems which far exceeds the resources and funds which the University can make available and how do you determine what part of Society's problems should receive priority? Putting it another way, how does a University achieve new directions while sustaining established programs and still maintain solvency? and how does a University obtain the seed money to gain insights on implementing new directions? and how do you determine that new directions are so compelling that they will either attract new resources or failing that will justify diminishing old programs? And how as a practical matter do you implement that old belief that a University setting ought to be flexible enough to try out new programs and evaluate them?

The University-Urban Interface Program (UUIP) upon which we are reporting here is designed to help us seek the answers to a large variety of questions. UUIP is an action-research effort designed to study the actual and potential roles of the University of Pittsburgh in the community in a time of change. By chronicling and evaluating efforts and innovations, their successes and failures, the hope is to improve this University's urban interaction and to establish guidelines for other interested organizations or institutions.

Five basic projects are included within the University-Urban Interface Program: (1) Minority and Community Services; (2) Campus Development Impact; (3) Communications; (4) Long-Range Pittsburgh Goals; and (5) University Governance

Organization for Community Relations. These five priorities are compatible with strong public statements by the Chancellor, committing University skills and resources to active public service in the community, especially in the cause of social and racial justice. The interaction between major city-based universities and their urban communities has become a matter of great national significance. On the one hand, the increasing intensity of our urban problems and the growing public awareness of and concern about these problems have given them the highest national domestic priority. Almost simultaneously, on the other hand, the major universities of the country have come to be viewed, more than ever before, as powerful resources for solving all sorts of national problems and for achieving national priorities. These two developments converge in what can be called the university-urban interface.

Minority and Community Services

Minority and Community Services encompasses selective projects conducted by the University to which research modules have been attached. In this larger framework activities undertaken through academic departments or individual scholars are being examined in an Operation Outreach effort. Two examples of joint community-university operations are the Right Start Project, a collaborative enterprise conducted by the Hill District Psychology Center associated with the University, Department of Psychology and the Taking Care of Business community organization; the second is a project collaboration between the Graduate School of Social Work and the Neighborhood Centers Association of the North Side of the City, a Community Chest sponsored agency. Two other independent Outreach Projects serve as models for the efforts of departments of individual scholars. The first is the Student Consultant Project (SCP), run through the Graduate School of Business (GSB), which is designed to assist black businessmen within the community. The second is the Clarifying Environments Laboratory (CEL) program linked to the University through the Learning Research and Development Center and Department of

Sociology. This project, with a program that was formerly undertaken exclusively in a University laboratory setting, is now conducted in a center-city black school.

Campus Development

Campus Development Impact includes delineation of issues based on comparative data from other institutions including the Morningside Heights Gymnasium controversy at Columbia. From a study of such materials, major issues related to collaborative planning have emerged as: (1) Is campus development necessary? (2) Did the University make long-range plans and/or were the plans revealed to the public? (3) Is the University sensitive to problems of resident relocation? (4) Has the University planned for multi-use buildings? (5) Has the University made an effort to reconcile differences with the community? (6) How will the exemption or taxation of new development be handled? (7) What forms of collaborative planning work best?

Communications

The Communications Project focuses on: (1) accuracy of and response to specific messages, (2) effect of communications on attitudes, and (3) mapping of structures which impede or facilitate the flow of communications to or from the community.

The goal of this communications research is to explore the perceptions of the University held by its various publics, to measure changes in perception and ascertain the causes of those changes, to analyze the discrepancies between these perceptions and the reality of the University, and then to suggest ways of communicating to each of the University's publics a more realistic and accurate impression. The University's publics are many and diverse; they include businessmen, labor unions, professionals, religious groups, minorities, nationality groups, foundations, local government, alumni, parents of students, and four groups within the University itself (students, faculty, administrators, and staff).

UUIP is attempting to analyze selected University channels of communication, to scrutinize the information flowing through them, and to define the publics they are reaching or failing to reach. Staff members have systematically analyzed the content of a variety of publications--the student paper, the bi-weekly University newspaper, the quarterly alumni paper, the newsletter for parents of students, the commuter student paper, news releases issued by the office of News and Publications, and articles about the University appearing in the city's two daily papers--in an attempt to determine the kinds of messages about the University seen by its various publics. They also have distributed questionnaires to students and alumni in an attempt to ascertain the instruments of communication upon which they depend for information about the University and to define their image of the University and its mission.

One important offshoot of the communications phase of UUIP research has been a special study of the University's economic impact upon its community. This study was a joint undertaking of UUIP and the Educational Systems Research Group of Washington, D. C., and Toronto, Canada. It is modeled on a pioneering study published by the American Council on Education, Estimating the Impact of a College or University on the Local Economy, in which methods are proposed for developing a balance sheet which would measure a university's real net contributions against its hypothetical cost to the community. The study, a prototype application which took several months, spells out for the first time in dollars and cents some of the ways in which the University pays its way in the community. It is hoped that follow-up studies can be conducted in the years ahead so that trends can be identified and analyzed.

Long-Range Pittsburgh Goals

The aim of this project is to establish a reliable system for identifying the community's long-range goals and ways in which the University can relate to those goals most meaningfully. Several steps have been taken toward the development of such a system.

In the spring of 1971, under UUIP sponsorship, a Pittsburgh Goals Study was conducted in which 106 prominent community leaders were asked to express their views on 28 civic changes which might occur through 1975. The main purpose of the study was to discern any consensus as to possible changes in the city and to determine what changes might contribute to conflict. It was also hoped that results of the study would provide feedback to the leaders themselves as to how other community leaders view the city's future and enable them to gauge the extent to which their sentiments are shared by their associates.

Another phase of this project has been the sponsorship of a series of forums bringing together community leaders and faculty members to discuss topics of common concern. The four forums held to date have focused on "Conflict Management," "The Administration of Justice," "Health Services," and "Community Goals and the Government of Metropolis." For each of the forums, background papers were prepared which examined the problems in detail and recommended ways in which the university and community might work together to solve them. A summary of the proceedings of the forums will be published and circulated to participants.

An ultimate goal is to explore ways of bridging the gap between the University's and the community's perspectives on common problems. An outgrowth may be the establishment of mechanisms to more effectively cope with urgent urban problems. Hopefully, the results will help to articulate better the roles of the University, government, community organizations, leaders, and institutions and will leave a legacy of useful methods for dealing with community issues.

University Governance for Community Relations

It is hoped that the data which are being collected in connection with the four research projects just described will make it possible, finally, to determine the degree of complexity with which the institution is dealing, to assess the effectiveness of its current response, and to identify ways of

improving that response. Consequently, UUIP's final task will be to suggest alternative policies and organizational configurations so that the University's community relations and its overall mission may be enhanced.

Conceptually, the UUIP program is being conducted with an institution-building perspective that provides a framework for studying variables such as objectives, resource allocation, personnel, leadership, and organizational structure and linkages within different contexts. Methods used include survey research, content analysis, regular focused interviews with key persons, analysis of comparative programs in other institutions, social area analysis[1], and concurrent evaluation.[2] Different methods are used in specific projects.

Use of interim research results by policy makers within administrative and academic departments of the University provide information on their value in practice. Incorporation of such recommendations into policy-making streams is a vital topic related to governance, and one which may shed light on the process of how reform and innovation occur.

Implications and Conclusions

The manifold responsibilities of the University as an educator, provider of services including research, citizen-neighbor, as well as a model or exemplar for other institutions are being considered. The boundaries of responsibility and the limitations of resources are also variables. Recent discussions in scholarly journals of the embattled University and the city, the academic revolution, and the politicization of the arena of university discourse, provides ample justification for scientific importance of the program. The effort constitutes a major challenge and opportunity for the University of Pittsburgh both on the local scene and as a study with wider national implications.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Social area analysis" is a means of analyzing census data through a framework of three basic factors: socio-economic status, ethnicity, and familism-urbanization.

2. See Paul Lazarsfeld, et al. (eds.), The Uses of Sociology, Basic Books, 1967, p. XV.